

CHAL 1113-60

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8 AUG 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Chief, DPD

SUBJECT: Operational Capability

1. A critical review of the present CHALICE organization poses several questions directly related to our operational posture. What is our operational capability? What kind of productive mission can we fly now? Do we have aircraft ready on a moments notice to fly a directed mission? What is the operational status of pilots? Can we carry out our assigned commitments? The answers are essentially negative but also capable of correction with aggressive action.

2. The only operational capability we now have is that which could be staged from [ ] This in itself is most marginal and cannot be construed as including any kind of overflight of a sensitive area. In fact it is realistically limited to a domestic [ ]

[ ] We cannot, except under the pressure of actual hostilities, guarantee to provide support for target damage assessment for SAC BWP.

3. While all U-2's can carry sufficient equipment for overflight operations there are none which can go on a moments notice. The aircraft at [ ] have been used largely as test beds and will require some shake down to accept camera and ELINT gear. The aircraft at [ ] have not been off the ground since 1 May 1960 for any type of flight and they cannot be considered fit for operational flight without a complete check out period.

4. The profession caliber of U-2 pilots is not open to question but their current capability for photo missions is on a down hill run. The last directed operational mission flown by a [ ] pilot was 27 July 1959 and that was overseas. The [ ] pilots have not flown the U-2 since 1 May 1960 for any reason. They are not to be considered current in the aircraft.

5. The picture is not nearly so black as it appears at first reading because we can shortly regain a capability by merely flying the U-2. [ ] can regain an operational posture in preparation for eventual staging by flying typical practice photo missions. This will have to wait for the coming change-over of units but it should be a first order of business. [ ] can do so merely by flying their aircraft as before.

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6. I strongly recommend that the U-2's have the paint removed to facilitate their ungrounding; then they should be allowed to fly routine local area flights openly to regain operational effectiveness of both vehicle and equipment. Further, since there is one aircraft at [redacted] which can use the weather package now, [redacted]

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SIGNED

Chief, Operations Branch, DPD-DD/P

DPD-DD/P OPS/CHAL [redacted]

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4 August 1960

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